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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA/DSCA// PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/14/2026
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: TURKISH TROOPS IN THE SOUTHEAST STAYING PUT FOR NOW

REF: A. ANKARA 6419

[1](#)B. ANKARA 2449
[1](#)C. ANKARA 5738

Classified By: CDA Nancy McEldowney, reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: In past years, the annual December snowfall prompted the re-deployment of Turkish troops away from the Iraqi border region back to bases in the West. However, given the increased intensity of the PKK terrorist campaign this summer and continued low-level engagement with Turkish security forces despite a PKK cease-fire, we expect that not all of the troops and artillery deployed to the southeast will return to their garrisons. Some will likely remain deployed to conduct winter operations and prepare for an anticipated PKK spring offensive in 2007. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) The PKK's unilateral cease-fire, which began on October 1 (ref c), has resulted in fewer clashes between Turkish security forces and PKK terrorists, but IED explosions and sporadic fighting continue. According to the Turkish press, the military leadership stated on October 30 that there had been no decline in terrorist attacks since the initiation of the cease-fire (a claim which is not borne out by open-source information in the Turkish press and TGS's own website listing of PKK attacks), possibly signaling their intention to maintain an active posture.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) Following a significant up-tick in PKK attacks this summer, between 9-10,000 troops were deployed from bases in western Turkey to the southeast to augment the 200,000 troops assigned to the 2nd Army based in Diyarbakir. We expect some of those troops to remain either at winterized base camps or at garrisons in the southeast to respond to PKK activities throughout the winter and into the spring. By leaving troops and artillery in place, the military would also be better prepared to initiate action against the PKK once the snow melts.

[1](#)4. (S/NF) Several battalions have headed back to their homes bases in central or western Turkey, but others remain in place. The Turkish Special Forces Commander in Silopi notified the US Liaison Officer there that Turkish troops have been withdrawn for the winter from their five seasonal mountain-top observation posts in Iraq. At the same time, however, up to 300 troops are preparing to deploy to the southeast to support the recently established Third Tactical Infantry Division Headquarters in Yuksekova (Hakkari province).

15. (S/NF) For those returning to their home bases in the West, the pace of re-deployment will depend primarily on local weather conditions, which are not yet severe, but also on the recent flash flooding in the Diyarbakir province following heavy rains there, which has impeded travel. By early December the majority of re-deployments should be completed, and we will have a more accurate picture of the remaining troop and equipment presence.

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